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IMMIGRATION AND THE WAR

BY PROFESSOR ROBERT DE C. WARD

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A CRISIS has been reached in our immigration policy. The war has, for the moment, very largely reduced the flow of aliens to our shores. For the first time in many decades we have breathing space. On the other hand, the effects of the war upon the peoples from which our future immigration will come are likely to be far-reaching. This fact will, after the war is over, bring us face to face with many new and difficult problems which need careful consideration at the present time. We must think clearly, decide wisely and act quickly. We need new immigration legislation. We need it at once.

Our present consideration naturally comes under three heads. First, the present status of immigration. Second, the probable future volume and character of immigration. Third, the necessary changes in our existing immigration laws.

The Present Status of Immigration.—From a total annual immigration of nearly a million and a half during the fiscal years 1913 and 1914, and an annual net increase in alien population (*i. e.*, deducting the numbers of those who returned to their own countries) of 800,000, the number of immigrant aliens fell to a little over 325,000 during the year ending June 30, 1915. Further, owing to the unusually large numbers who left this country, the actual increase in our population through immigration was only 50,000.¹

During the months July to December, inclusive, the number of arrivals was 169,291; of departures, 166,899, leaving a net increase of population of 2,392. The war has thus brought us, suddenly and unexpectedly, face to face with a great experiment in restriction—restriction of a far more drastic sort than has ever been suggested by any but a few of our most radical exclusionists. Furthermore, the war has brought, temporarily, an interesting change in the racial character of our alien arrivals. The majority of those coming in recent months has been from northern and western Europe, whereas, under ordinary conditions, nearly three-quarters of our immigrants are southern and eastern Europeans. The British Isles, Holland, Denmark, the Scandinavian countries, from all of which there has been a fairly regular steamship service, have kept on sending us about their usual quota. Of those aliens who have returned home for military duty, the large ma-

¹ For the sake of simplicity, these statistics are given in round numbers.

jority came originally from southern and eastern Europe. Immigration restrictionists have observed with satisfaction that there has been less unemployment than usual during this winter, even in our large eastern cities, and realize, what they have always maintained, that reducing the inflow of unskilled labor must inevitably simplify and lighten all our burdens of public and private charity. They observe, also, that there has been no widespread, serious or disturbing lack of labor in our great industries or public undertakings. The predictions of those who have persistently maintained that even a very moderate restriction of immigration would immediately lead to a labor shortage and greatly curtail our industries have been shown to be in error. It is true that there has been somewhat of a deficiency in the supply of domestic servants, especially in New York City. This is partly due to the demand of the factories for more operatives. And in any case, the situation is not without its advantages, if it results, as it undoubtedly must, in more efficient and less wasteful housekeeping.

An important eastern newspaper, which has always strongly opposed the further restriction of immigration, recently lamented the fact that the present small alien inflow would result in somewhat higher wages for our laboring classes. This puts the case very squarely before us. Unrestricted immigration; lower wages; cheap labor; un-American standards of living, on the one hand. A reasonable selection and restriction of immigration; better wages; more intelligent labor; American standards of living, on the other.

The Probable Future Volume of Our Immigration.—Is immigration likely to be greater after the war than before it? Or are we to witness a general and more or less permanent decrease? Our economists are already considering this question, and Commissioner of Immigration F. C. Howe, of New York, has discussed it in several magazine articles. With most of Commissioner Howe's conclusions we find ourselves in general agreement. The demoralization of industry; the breaking-up of homes; the roving restlessness of millions of men who will never be able to "settle down" again at home; the greatly increased burdens of taxation; the desire to fly from the horrors of future wars; the political, religious and social readjustments with the almost inevitable oppression and dissatisfaction of multitudes of people; the widespread destitution, misery and hopelessness; the return to the United States of aliens who went home to fight and who will bring back with them many of their countrymen who have never been here; the desire of the foreign-born already in the United States to bring to America relatives and friends who are still left abroad—these and other causes will operate to bring us an increase in immigration which seems likely to surpass anything that we have ever known. It is easy to see what use the steamship agents

will make of the conditions following the war, in order to stimulate emigration from abroad. "Fly from the horrors of war; escape your taxes; go to a country where there are no wars; where there is no standing army; where wages are high and work is plenty; go to America." A considerable proportion of our immigration even in normal times is thus artificially stimulated. What will happen after the war it is easy to guess. Already, plans are being made by foreign companies for the establishment of new steamship lines, to bring emigrants from Europe and Asia to the United States.

All this is not mere idle speculation. Our statistics show that recent wars have in no case been followed by any permanent decrease in emigration from the countries involved. On the contrary, as Professor J. W. Jenks has pointed out, these wars have usually resulted in a large and almost immediate increase. After the Franco-Prussian war, immigration to this country from Germany and France increased, and attained its maximum not many years after the war. Greek immigration increased steadily after the last Turco-Grecian war. The more recent Balkan war was followed by increased immigration from the Balkan states. The numbers from Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Greece in the year after that war were nearly double those of the year preceding the war. Those who may maintain that immigration will decrease permanently after the present war is over have no statistics on which to base their claim.

On the other hand, of course, there will be tendencies which may operate to cut down emigration from certain European countries. An enormous amount of constructive work will have to be done, in the rebuilding of roads, railways, bridges, factories and dwellings, and in the general rehabilitation of what the war will have damaged or destroyed. Immense numbers of skilled and also of unskilled workmen will be needed for these enterprises. Owing to the thinning of the ranks of the most efficient laborers, by death or by injury, during the war, wages may perhaps rise, but whether the impoverished nations of Europe will be able to compete with our American wages, and thus keep their people at home, yet remains to be seen. Again, it is not unlikely that some of the European governments will take steps to discourage, to check, perhaps even for a time to prohibit emigration. The work of reconstruction after the war will go on most actively and most effectively in the countries of northern and western Europe, where the state and industry are well organized, and where the plans for reorganization will be carefully prepared. It is in these countries that there will inevitably be the most immediate and best paid opportunities for the largest number of laborers. And it is, therefore, from these same countries, from which we have in the past received our all-around "best" immigrants, that we

are likely to see the greatest falling off in immigration. On the other hand, in the countries of southern and eastern Europe and of western Asia, immigration from which has been on the whole more of a problem, because of the differences in race, political institutions, education and social habits, there will not be the same organized reconstructive work. From these countries, therefore, so largely in the more primitive condition of agriculture, the forces tending to promote emigration will be operative to a much greater degree than ever before. Thus the great preponderance of southern and eastern Europeans, already the most striking feature in our recent immigration, is likely to be still further increased after the war is over. To put it briefly, the centripetal tendency, to keep people in Europe, will be greater among the nations of northern and western Europe; the centrifugal tendency, to drive people out, will be greater in southern and eastern Europe, and in western Asia. Balancing the reasons for a possible decrease in our immigration after the war against those which will bring about an increase, the weight of probability is strongly on the side of a marked increase. This increase will doubtless for some years be largely one of women and children, whose care will throw a very heavy burden upon all our charitable agencies.

The Probable Future Mental and Physical Character of Our Immigration.—No one who has at heart the future of the American race can fail to view with concern the probable effects of the war upon the physical, mental and moral condition of our immigrants. The introduction of pestilential war diseases, such as cholera, typhus, typhoid fever and the like, is not greatly to be feared, although some of our medical men are already viewing this problem with much concern. On the other hand, the more subtle and much less easily detected venereal diseases, which are always rampant in great armies in war time, and the mental breakdowns, of which there are so many thousands of cases among the soldiers at the front, present another aspect of the health problem which is far more serious.¹ Great numbers of soldiers, although not actually afflicted with any specific disease, will eventually come to the United States, maimed, crippled, wounded, enfeebled by illness or exposure, or mentally unstable. The fittest, mentally and physically; those who in the past have had the initiative and the courage to emigrate, will be dead, at the prime of life, or will be needed at home to carry on the work of rebuilding and reorganization. These are the men whom Europe will do its utmost to keep at home. The least fit are likely to emigrate. Many of those who, because of mental or physical disability, will find themselves least able to earn a living abroad, will be the very ones most

² It is very significant that the final report (March, 1916) of Lord Sydenham's Royal Commission on Social Diseases dwells particularly upon the inevitable effect of the war in greatly increasing the seriousness of the situation.

likely to be "assisted" by relatives and friends in this country to "come to America." Against the emigration of such persons the European governments will not set up any barriers. There are good grounds, therefore, for expecting, with reasonable certainty, that our immigration in the next few decades after the war will be of a lower physical and mental standard than it has been in the past.

The moral effects of the war are by no means to be disregarded. As Commissioner Howe has clearly pointed out, a widespread demoralization will prevail among the peoples now at war, resulting from life in the army; the breaking off of family ties and responsibilities; the restlessness and difficulty of settling down again after the fighting is over; the craving for freedom and liberty as soon as the military discipline is relaxed. Our future immigration is sure to contain a large proportion of these disturbed, restless, irresponsible men; less amenable to law and order; less disposed to conform to our conditions of life; less easily assimilable, than has been the case in the past. The interruption of the education of multitudes of young men who have been called on for military service, and who will never take up again their scholastic or vocational training, is a serious phase of our general problem. This group will go forth into the world insufficiently and unsatisfactorily prepared for the business of life. For years to come, our immigration will include large numbers of youths and of men whose standards of education will be lower than would have been the case had there been no war.

And what of the more distant future? What of the effects upon the unborn generations? This question is obviously a difficult one. Opinions vary greatly in regard to it. As a rather extreme representative of one side, we may turn to Dr. David Starr Jordan's latest book, whose title clearly indicates the message which its author seeks to bring, "War and the Breed: the Relation of War to the Downfall of Nations" (1915). War, as Dr. Jordan strikingly puts it, "impoverishes the breed." "The strongest and best men are the ones who are killed or injured, and who leave few or no children. The weaklings live, marry and continue the race. The result is an inevitable impoverishment of the stock. Dr. Jordan notes the reduction in the required height of French soldiers as the result of the Napoleonic wars and the killing off and wounding of the taller men. The French and German babies of 1870-71 who came to be mustered as soldiers twenty years later, were found to be an inferior lot of men. And, more recently, as noted by Dr. Jordan in *Science* (New York), a similar condition has occurred in Japan. The Japanese children born at the time of the war between China and Japan, twenty years ago, became conscripts in 1915. According to the *Asahi* of Tokyo, as translated in the *Japan Chronicle*, the number of conscripts in Tokyo decreased over 16 per cent. For Japan

as a whole there was an increase of conscripts in 1915, but the rate of increase was only 30 to 50 per cent. of the normal. Furthermore, a lowering in the quality of the new soldiers is distinctly observable. The *Asahi* says that "most of those who underwent conscript examinations this year were born during the war and therefore are sons of those too old or too weak to go to the front, and so it is no surprising thing if the conscripts of 1915 are of exceptionally delicate constitution." This "impoverishment of the breed," in Dr. Jordan's opinion, is an inevitable result of war. The longer the conflict continues, the more serious will be the effects upon future generations. The weakling fathers—too young, too old, or too feeble to fight—and the improperly nourished, overworked and harassed mothers of Europe, are handing on to their children who are now being born an inheritance of physical and mental unfitness which will mark not only this generation but future generations, through the long vista of the time to come. An increase in the number of defective children, now and hereafter, is a condition which Europe must face, and which, because it will affect the character of our immigrants, vitally concerns the United States. Dr. Aleš Hrdlička, of the Smithsonian Institution, one of our leading anthropologists, contributes to Dr. Jordan's book an opinion as to the probable effects of heavy artillery firing on the nervous systems of soldiers in the war. He believes that subjection to the constant roar of the firing will "result in a more or less defective mental or nervous state in the progeny of such individuals."

Dr. Jordan's view may be thought rather extreme. The problem is a highly complex one. There are not lacking those who take a different position. It is pointed out that wars have been so constant, not only in Europe, but over most of the world, that if wars do result in racial deterioration, national degeneracy should have followed them. Again, it is urged that by no means all of the physically and mentally fit who go to war are killed, or are so impaired in body or mind as to be undesirable fathers for future generations of offspring. The number and the quality of the men who will survive the war is at present an unknown and indeterminable element in the problem. Professor Roswell H. Johnson, of the University of Pittsburgh, has recently warned us¹ against sweeping and unqualified statements that war is either good or bad in its effects on the human race. Some wars are mainly good; others mainly bad. A conscripted army is likely to be physically, and probably also in other respects, superior to the bulk of the population. The conditions of poverty, improper sanitation and inadequate medical treatment in the homes tend toward a deterioration of the race. Many factors must thus be taken into account. In summing up his argument, Professor Johnson says:

¹ *Journal of Heredity*, December, 1915.

In the present war it would seem that the high quality of both sides compared with the rest of the world is so predominant a dysgenic factor that, together with the other dysgenic features, the eugenic results are overbalanced. The human species therefore, on account of this, is at present declining in inherent quality faster than in any previous length of time.

In connection with this particular subject, it is highly significant that Germany, which is universally recognized as preeminently the military power of the world, and whose scientific study of military problems is so thoroughly organized, should already be giving serious attention to the racial effects of the war. On October 26-28, 1915, there was held in Berlin, a *Tagung für die Erhaltung und Mehrung der deutschen Volkskraft*—surely a highly significant designation. Over one thousand delegates attended, and the proceedings were marked by an extraordinary unanimity of sentiment. It was recognized that “war kills the best, the bravest, the healthiest, eradicating once for all the finest strains of the race.” There was serious discussion with a view to bringing about an increased multiplication of the fit by various means, chiefly the assistance of large families of healthy stock.

From the foregoing considerations it appears that the effect of the Great War upon the United States, will, unless all signs fail, be profound and far-reaching. For it will affect the mental, physical and even moral characteristics of millions of our future immigrants and of their descendants.

The Idealist and Immigration Restriction.—There is still in our midst a group of idealists who shudder at the mere thought of a further regulation of immigration. They hold fast to the vision of the universal brotherhood of man. They call “narrow,” “ungenerous,” “selfish,” “un-American,” any one who suggests further immigration legislation. They point out what an enormous debt our country owes to its foreign-born citizens. They never tire of reminding us of the remarkable achievements of foreign-born children in our public schools. They have absolute confidence in the strength of our institutions to assimilate all people, of every land, who may choose to come here. They believe that this is the world’s great “melting pot,” where race hatred and race differences are to be forever done away with. They produce such endless and impressive statistics to prove that our recent immigrants are far ahead of the native-born in all that pertains to good citizenship that we sometimes cannot help wondering how our ancestors, of Anglo-Saxon stock, who originally settled the United States, ever had the genius and the wisdom and the courage to fight the Revolutionary War, or to develop our American democratic government. They believe in keeping the United States forever the “asylum and the refuge for the down-trodden and oppressed of all nations.” Wonderful ideals these are, and tremendously inspiring, when eloquently presented, is the

thought of the "haven of refuge." Yet those who hold these views, sincere though they are, are nevertheless inconsistent. Not one of them really believes in a "haven" open, unrestrictedly, to all comers. Not one really believes that we ought to admit, unreservedly, the insane, the idiot, the criminal, the prostitute, those who have "loathsome or dangerous contagious disease." There are probably none of them who want our doors wide open for all time for the incoming of millions upon millions of Chinese, Japanese and Hindus. They may think themselves perfectly sincere when they use the haven argument, but they are obviously not so. They really do not want their "asylum," of which they say so much, to become an insane asylum, nor their "refuge" to become an almshouse or a penitentiary.

Standing close behind these idealists—whom the late Gen. Francis A. Walker well termed "optimists beyond all bounds of reason"—and using the same eloquent and catchy appeals, come the manufacturer, the land owner, the contractor, the railroad and the steamship man—all profiting directly through the influx of unlimited "cheap labor"; all demanding more "hands," and most of them indifferent as to the conditions of the bodies and of the minds which of necessity go with these "hands." Our large employers of labor naturally enough use the "brotherhood of man" and the "haven of refuge" appeal. It blinds people to their real motive. Thus many of our idealists have been misled into cooperating with these "big money" interests, not realizing that the true motive which controls these is purely selfish. Another group which is strongly opposed to immigration restriction is made up of the leaders of our foreign-born colonies, mostly contractors, steamship agents, small bankers, newspaper men, and the like, all of whom feed on our recent immigrants and want the supply to continue as large as possible. And politicians whose positions depend upon the votes of foreign-born citizens constitute another small but very noisy group, also ranged behind the banners inscribed "Haven of Refuge" and "Asylum for the Oppressed." Professor E. A. Ross, of the University of Wisconsin, has clearly brought out one fact in regard to the idealists which is not generally appreciated and yet has great significance.

The investor, landowner, and contractor can well afford to preach world-wide brotherhood. The professional man sitting serene above the arena of struggle can nobly rebuke narrowness and race hatred. Throughout our comfortable classes one finds high-sounding humanitarianism and facile lips of sympathy for immigrants coexistent with heartless indifference to what depressive immigration is doing and will do to American wage earners and their children. If the stream of immigration included capitalists with funds, merchants ready to invade all lines of business, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and professors qualified to compete immediately with our professional men, even judges and officials able to lure votes away from their own candidates for office, the pressure would be felt all along the line and there might be something heroic in these groups

standing for the equal right of all races to American opportunities. But since actually the brunt is borne by labor, it is easy for the shielded to indulge in generous views on the subject of immigration.

Necessary Changes in Our Immigration Laws.—There is one thing about our immigration legislation which it is essential to keep in mind. The whole subject is a very difficult one. To understand it one must know the history of immigration and of our immigration laws from the beginning; the regulations which at different times have governed the enforcement of these laws; the interpretations which have been put upon them by the courts; and the actual workings of the laws as compared with the way in which they were intended to work. For the layman to have knowledge of these facts is clearly rarely possible. And laymen who, without sufficient knowledge of the subject, write or speak on immigration legislation, simply add to the confusion, bring themselves into ridicule, and delay the enactment of proper laws. In this matter, as in so many others, the only way is to accept the conclusions of the experts. Our present immigration laws aim to exclude some twenty-one classes of mentally, physically, morally and economically undesirable aliens. On paper, the list of the excluded classes is long and formidable, and seems amply sufficient. But careful and unprejudiced students of immigration, both within the immigration service and outside of it, agree that we have not been keeping out the unfit sufficiently even to preserve the mental and physical *status quo* of our population, to say nothing of promoting any improvement. These laws grew up slowly, as the result of experience extending over many years. They have served as the basis for the immigration legislation of Great Britain and of Canada. They were not the result of any “know-nothing” agitation, of the sudden demand of a political party, or of the whim of a moment. As recently as 1875 we excluded only criminals and prostitutes. Slowly, deliberately, carefully, this legislation was planned and enacted. Nevertheless, the experience of years has brought the defects to light. Competent government immigration officials have pointed them out. Disinterested citizens, and economists, and medical men and social workers, have studied these laws, and have shown us where they fail to accomplish their purpose. The last few years have witnessed a very remarkable spirit of cooperation among our experts on immigration matters in the effort to frame new legislation which shall really be adequate to meet the conditions which experience has shown to exist. There is a bill now before the House of Representatives (H. R. 10384, Union Calendar No. 36, Report No. 95) which, all things considered, is the most comprehensive immigration bill ever introduced into Congress. It is the result of years of careful study of our present law and of its workings. Its provisions, as the commissioner-general of immigration says in his last annual report (June 30, 1915), “contain

the result of experience and investigation—of the experience of administrative officers, extending over nearly a quarter of a century, in the enforcement of various statutes regulating immigration, and of the investigations conducted variously but in particular by the Immigration Commission, created under the act of 1907, the report of which, comprising 42 volumes, was submitted to Congress in December, 1910.” The provisions of this bill “have been drawn with great care and thoughtfulness, . . . by them the law is made certain in its definitions and clear in its term throughout—improvements badly needed in the existing statute.” The bill aims to protect the United States against the incoming of mentally and physically, and of otherwise unfit and undesirable aliens. It also embodies several provisions which would ensure more humane treatment to the aliens themselves, and would, to a large extent, do away with the hardships involved in the deportation of aliens who are excluded at our ports, by preventing their original embarkation. And in response to the ever increasing demand—greatly strengthened by the probable effects of the war—for the further restriction of economically undesirable immigration, the bill also proposes certain amendments designed to keep out some of this group.

The bill is largely a codification of our existing immigration laws, but embodies several important new provisions. It is clearly out of the question to discuss this bill, which covers 62 pages of print, in detail in the present article. It is our purpose merely to call attention to a few of the more important changes which its enactment would make in our present laws, but with special reference to the exclusion of the mentally and physically unfit. In regard to the better detection, exclusion and deportation of this group there is no essential difference of opinion among those who have the future of our race at heart. The unanimity of feeling in this matter is encouraging, but, in view of our past experience with mentally and physically defective aliens who have been admitted to this country, it is not surprising.

To the excluded classes the bill adds *persons of constitutional psychopathic inferiority* and *persons with chronic alcoholism*, both of which designations have a definite meaning to alienists, and to the surgeons of the United States Public Health Service. That many persons not properly to be certified as insane but who would, in many cases, become insane soon after arrival, could be kept out under the former provision, has long been the opinion of the physicians, the alienists and the immigration officials who have made a special study of this subject, and who have for years strongly urged the inclusion of this new provision in our immigration law. Chronic alcoholics, who are surely undesirable members of our community, are often discovered by our examining surgeons, but as the law does not now state specifically that

they shall be excluded they must in most cases be allowed to land. The new bill excludes *vagrants*, and *persons afflicted with tuberculosis in any form*. It also aims to prevent the embarkation of aliens afflicted with idiocy, insanity, imbecility, feeble-mindedness, epilepsy, constitutional psychopathic inferiority, chronic alcoholism, tuberculosis in any form, or a loathsome or dangerous contagious disease, by imposing upon steamship companies who bring such aliens a fine of \$200 plus the amount paid by the excluded alien from his initial point of departure provided the secretary of labor is satisfied that the defects could have been detected by a competent medical examination before embarkation. This is an excellent and humane provision, and would go far toward making these companies more careful in the sale of passage tickets, and would save many unfortunate aliens the disappointment and hardship of being deported after arrival at our ports. The present fine is \$100, has been shown to be too small to be really effective, and does not cover as many cases as are above enumerated. A new fine of \$25, plus the alien's transportation expenses, is established in cases of certain other less serious mental defects, and of physical defects which may affect an alien's ability to earn his living.

The new bill provides for a very much more thorough medical examination of arriving aliens, especially with reference to the detection of mental diseases; gives the medical inspectors the exclusive services of interpreters, and suitable facilities for the detention and examination of the aliens. This amendment has been strongly urged by the united action of the most important scientific bodies in the United States which deal with the prevention and treatment of mental disease, by state medical associations and by individual physicians all over the country. That our medical inspection has been hopelessly inadequate has long been known to the experts. We have not had enough medical inspectors, and those on duty have not had adequate facilities for their work. Thus it has come about that, in spite of our law prohibiting the admission of insane and mentally defective aliens, our institutions have been filling up with just these people. As Dr. T. W. Salmon, of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, has well said:

There is no reason for the acceptance of a single insane or mentally undesirable alien except inability to determine his condition.

It is a very significant fact that, with the decrease in immigration since the war, particularly at New York, a more rigid medical inspection has become possible. This "intensive examination" has resulted in a marked increase in the numbers of aliens certified as having physical or mental defects. "Certainly," says the commissioner-general, "there could be no better or more convincing argument . . . for increasing the medical force sufficiently to insure that no alien shall be admitted to the

country until he has been subjected to a medical inspection really calculated to disclose his mental or physical deficiencies." With this statement all public-spirited citizens will surely agree.

The new bill extends from 3 to 5 years the period during which aliens may be deported who at the time of entry belonged to one or more of the excluded classes; who have become public charges from causes existing prior to landing; and of some other groups. This extension of the deportation period has been urged, year in and year out, by heads of institutions who have had to do with dependent, defective and delinquent aliens, by organized charitable societies, and, perhaps most strongly, by the former commissioner of immigration at the port of New York, Hon. Wm. Williams, whose thorough, sane and illuminating study of the whole immigration problem has contributed greatly to our understanding of the subject. It is the conviction of all the unprejudiced experts who have studied this problem that a five-year deportation period would relieve our penal and charitable institutions of an enormous financial burden, reaching into the millions of dollars, and would rid our communities of large numbers of defectives who otherwise would remain here, many of them a burden upon state or city, and many of them starting long lines of defective and delinquent children.

The new bill strengthens the provisions of existing law regarding the "White Slave" traffic; makes the inspection of steerage quarters more thorough; compels steamship companies, when deporting aliens, to give such aliens as good quarters as those for which they paid on the voyage to this country; makes possible the expulsion from the country of alien anarchists and criminals, even when they have become such after entry; and in many other ways provides for the welfare of the alien as well as for the welfare of the United States.

All these new provisions regarding the more effective exclusion and the deportation of mentally and physically unfit aliens have been carefully drawn, as above stated, after consultation with experts who have seriously studied these particular aspects of our immigration problem. They were all suggested and strongly urged upon Congress years before the war broke out. Their enactment into law should have been effected long ago, under the usual conditions of normal immigration. But every argument in favor of this legislation has gained weight, incalculably, in view of the probable effects of the war upon the character of our future immigrants. As the commissioner-general says in his last annual report, the adoption of these amendments now "becomes an imperative necessity." It is for the best interests of our future race; it is for the best interests, in the long run, of humanity at large, to prevent, as far as may be possible, the coming to this country of the mental and physical derelicts of the war. It is unfair and ungenerous

to future generations of Americans to saddle upon them the tremendous burden of supporting not only the present generation of these people, but the long lines of their descendants. It is not doing our share in the promotion of race betterment if we, who have the matter in our own hands to-day, do not act at once, before it is too late.

The demand from the country at large for a further restriction of immigration which is "economically undesirable" has resulted in the inclusion, in the pending bill, of certain provisions which aim more or less directly at restriction, whereas the amendments above considered, relating to mentally and physically unfit aliens, are rather matters of the public health and safety than of a large regulation of immigration. It is clearly the temper of Congress as shown during the past few years, to combine all immigration legislation into one general bill. Hence we must consider briefly the provisions which have an economic, as well as those which have medical bearing.

The new bill excludes Hindus, whose immigration has only recently begun, but whose coming in inevitably larger and larger numbers will, if unchecked, lead us into many serious racial and economic difficulties. It increases the head tax from \$4 to \$8, but exempts children under 16 who accompany their father or mother. Under the present law, every alien, even an infant in arms, is required to pay a tax of \$4. In practise, however, the tax is paid by the steamship company, and is not a provision oppressive to the arriving alien.

The new bill provides for a reading test, in a very mild form, by excluding "all aliens over 16 years of age, physically capable of reading, who can not read the English language, or some other language or dialect, including Hebrew or Yiddish." Sweeping exceptions are made in the case of fathers and grandfathers over 55; wives, mothers, grandmothers, unmarried and widowed daughters; and of all aliens who are fleeing from religious persecution abroad. This is not the place to present any argument in favor of the reading test. It was recommended by 8 out of 9 members of the U. S. Immigration Commission "as the most feasible single method of restricting undesirable immigration." It has been endorsed, over and over again, by state legislatures; boards of charity; philanthropic organizations of all kinds; labor bodies; chambers of commerce; by our leading authorities on immigration and by citizens in all walks of life. In the past twenty years a reading test, often in a more severe form than the one at present proposed, has passed one House of Congress or the other more than twenty times. It has been truly said:

If ever the citizenship of the United States has given endorsement to any measure of legislation, it certainly has done so to the principles embodied in this bill.

Of course, to object to the reading test on the ground that it "will not exclude the educated rascal" is a sign either of gross ignorance or of a wilful attempt to mislead. The reading test is not to replace any existing provision of the present law. It is to be added to our present provisions. Criminals are already mentioned among the excluded classes, and we keep them out when we can, and as well as we can, although everybody familiar with the law, and with the difficulties of its enforcement, knows perfectly well that we really have no effective means of keeping out this group. No one maintains that the reading test is an ideal, or a perfect "solution" of our problem. As the editor of the *Review of Reviews* recently wrote:

The application of new tests could be made now with less practical inconvenience than at a later time. That of ability to read is far from being a logically perfect one; but it was recommended by the Immigration Commission, several years ago, after a vast and impartial study of the whole problem. It is not likely that this test would operate to shut out very many desirable immigrants. It would, however, affect appreciably that great tide of labor that moves back and forth in the steerage, retaining its citizenship in the countries of eastern and southern Europe. The literacy test could be so modified and applied in a reasonable spirit as not to exclude many families whose addition to our citizenship is to be encouraged.

And Dr. Edward T. Devine, than whom we have no higher authority on all matters of public and private philanthropy, has, in endorsing the reading test, expressed similar views.

A bill containing a similar provision was vetoed by President Cleveland March 2, 1897, partly because of an objectionable clause which would have led to friction with Canada; was promptly passed over his veto by the House, and would have been passed over the veto by the Senate if it had not been crowded out by a tremendous pressure of business just in the very last hours of that Congress. The pending reading test is much more liberal than that of twenty years ago. There was not the same reason for it then as there is now. *And President Cleveland said, after the expiration of his term, that his veto of that immigration bill was one of the great regrets of his public life.* In February, 1913, a general immigration bill embodying a reading test passed both Houses of Congress by an overwhelming vote, and was vetoed by President Taft. Instead of writing his veto message himself, President Taft sent to Congress a memorandum written by his Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Hon. Charles Nagel, of St. Louis, who had always been strongly opposed to any really effective regulation of immigration. This bill passed the Senate over the veto by a vote of 4 to 1, and was lost in the House by only a few votes less than the necessary two thirds.

During the last Congress (sixty-third) a very similar bill passed the House by a vote of 2 to 1; the Senate by a vote of 7 or 8 to 1; and only

failed by a few votes of passage over President Wilson's veto. The latter was based partly upon a clause in the bill which seemed to the President to take away the right of asylum in this country for political refugees. This matter has been remedied in the present bill.

Thus the pending bill comes up before Congress once more, embodying provisions for the preservation of our public health by more effective exclusion of mentally and physically undesirable aliens; providing for more humane and fairer treatment of the aliens themselves; and excluding certain additional groups which, in the opinion of our immigration experts, are economically or racially unfit. It is natural that so complex a bill, codifying all our existing immigration laws, and making changes in them, should meet with opposition. Some of this opposition is honest and sincere. Much of it is based on misconceptions of what the present law is and of the ways in which the new bill would modify it. Much of it is the result of agitation by "interested" persons who do not hesitate to mislead the foreign-born members of our communities by wilful misstatements of facts, and deliberate falsehoods regarding the actual wording and purpose of the bill. When no less eminent a citizen than Cardinal Gibbons was misled into thinking that the immigration bill which passed the last Congress required ability to read *English*, it is not surprising that the great masses of our recent immigrants are even more mistaken. Much of the opposition, now as always, comes from the railroad and steamship companies, and from the large employers of labor. Some of it is coming from the Japanese and the Chinese.

In the midst of all this tangle, it is the business of those of us who know the facts, and who understand the purpose and meaning of the new bill, to keep our minds clear and sane; to urge, insistently, that more attention ought to be paid to the needs of the people of the country as a whole and much less to the meetings, and speeches, and noisy "resolutions" of this or that group; to point out that the mental and physical welfare of the future American race should first of all be safeguarded, and that the demands of any local, or temporary, or selfish, or narrow interest are not for an instant to be put ahead of this, the most important of all our national responsibilities.